

Clinical Care Considerations and Resources

Source: [Maness DL](#)¹, [Khan M](#)¹. Care of the homeless: an overview [Am Fam Physician](#). 2014 Apr 15;89(8):634-40.

RESOURCE	WEBSITE
Adverse Childhood Experiences Study	http://www.acestudy.org
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved	http://www.clinicians.org
Healthcare Communities	http://www.healthcarecommunities.org
Health Care for the Homeless (information on caring for homeless persons)	http://www.hchmd.org/resources.shtml
Health Resources and Services Administration, Primary Care: The Health Center Program	http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov
Homelessness Resource Center (training, publications, bibliographies, referral lists, fact sheets, and resource library)	http://homeless.samhsa.gov/default.aspx
Homeless Shelter Directory	http://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org
National Alliance to End Homelessness	http://www.endhomelessness.org
National Call Center for Homeless Veterans (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)	http://www.va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp ; telephone: 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838)
National Center on Family	http://www.familyhomelessness.org
National Coalition for the	http://www.nationalhomeless.org

RESOURCE	WEBSITE
Homeless (national advocacy organization with information and links to local and state organizations)	
National Guideline Clearinghouse (evidence-based clinical practice guidelines)	http://www.guideline.gov
National Health Care for the Homeless Council (clinical resources, learning opportunities, and Respite Care Providers' Network)	http://www.nhchc.org/
Social Security Administration	http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-homeless.htm
StandUp for Kids	http://standupforkids.org/
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Center for Trauma-Informed Care	http://www.samhsa.gov/nctic/
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health	http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=2&lvlID=15
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veteran Homelessness Initiative	http://www.va.gov/homeless/

Special Considerations for Medication Use in Homeless Persons

MEDICATION	CONSIDERATION
Albuterol	Enhances effects of crack cocaine
Benzodiazepines	Sought for calming and sedating effects
Beta blockers and clonidine (Catapres)	Should be prescribed with caution, because discontinuing these medications suddenly can result in serious rebound hypertension At initiation, beta blockers can exacerbate depression Clonidine can be misused to prolong the effects of heroin and other opioids
Bupropion (Wellbutrin)	Can be pulverized and snorted to get high
Calcium channel blockers (especially diltiazem and verapamil), cyclooxygenase-2 inhibitors, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and medications for diabetes mellitus	May exacerbate heart failure
Diuretics	Can exacerbate dehydration, particularly in warmer climates, with limited access to water
Anticholinergic medications in combination with diuretics	Can cause dangerous (even fatal) hyperpyrexia in hot, humid environments without hydration
Drugs metabolized in the liver	Problematic in persons with chronic hepatitis
Pseudoephedrine	Can be used to make methamphetamine
Quetiapine (Seroquel)	Enhances effects of heroin
Statins	May worsen health outcomes in persons with chronic elevation of liver transaminase levels secondary to hepatitis B or C or in persons with long-term alcohol abuse

Special Considerations in Health Care for Homeless Persons

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES	INTERVENTION
Resource-related	Lack of transportation, competing priorities, lack of health insurance or other coverage	Outreach visits at multiple sites, patient-centered medical home, same-day access, assigned advocate/case manager, partnerships with community agencies
Self-management and interpersonal skills	Cognitive impairment, lack of education, chronic stress, sleep deprivation	Warm atmosphere in clinic, trust building between physician and patient, ensured privacy, staff education about homelessness, ready access to social workers
Shelter-related	Food and medication storage, safety, overcrowding	Regular contact with shelter or other site, guidance to shelter personnel about health care plan
Clinical		
Additional considerations in children	Abuse, mental health issues, conduct disorders	Confirmation that immunizations are up to date (e.g., human papillomavirus vaccine), developmental assessment, high index of suspicion for abuse
Additional considerations in women	Sexual abuse, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection	High index of suspicion for abuse, appropriate contraceptive choices, sexually transmitted infection screening, pregnancy test if indicated
Exposure: cold-related illness	Frostnip, frostbite, immersion foot, chilblains	Dry clothing, rewarming, underlying conditions treated
Exposure: heat-related illness	Heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke	Cooling, fluids, transport to hospital

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES	INTERVENTION
Mental health and cognitive problems	Alcohol- and drug-related problems, traumatic brain injury, learning disabilities	Ready access to mental health services, drug and alcohol abuse treatment, avoidance of further injury, consideration of neuropsychological testing
